

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
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SUBJ: DISAPPOINTING DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE KNESSET; GUSH
EMUNIM PLANS TO KEEP PRESSURE ON BEGIN

REF.: TEL AVIV 11187

1. SUMMARY: ANTI-BEGIN DEMONSTRATIONS BY SETTLERS OUTSIDE KNESSET DEC 28 CONSIDERED DISAPPOINTING BY GUSH EMUNIM. UNDAUNTED, GUSH SETTLER ACTION COMMITTEE TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON WITH PROTEST VIGIL OUTSIDE BEGIN'S JERUSALEM RESIDENCE. SETTLER PROTEST MEETINGS CONTINUE IN SADOT. MEANWHILE, BEGIN TAKES OFF HIS GLOVES IN RESPONSE TO GUSH CRITICISM AND TAUNTS.

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2. MORE THAN 1,000 JEWISH SETTLERS FROM THE OCCUPIED AREAS DEMONSTRATED PEACEFULLY OUTSIDE THE KNESSET WHILE BEGIN'S PEACE PROPOSALS WERE BEING DEBATED. AS EXPECTED, DEMONSTRATORS WERE VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED TO THOSE PARTS OF BEGIN'S PLAN WHICH THREATEN THEIR SETTLEMENTS. SEVERAL MKS TALKED TO THE SETTLERS AND PROMISED TO DEFEND THEIR INTERESTS IN THE KNESSET AND WITHIN THEIR PARTIES. HAARETZ NOTED THAT MANY DEMON-

STRATORS HAD COME WITH CHILDREN AND TOOK TIME OUT TO PICNIC ON THE GRASS NEAR THE KNESSET. ALTHOUGH MOST DISPERSED IN THE EVENING, SOME 30 DEMONSTRATORS REMAINED BEHIND AND BEGIN DANCING AND SINGING IN THE STREET. POLICE AND KNESSET GUARDS HAD TO REMOVE THEM FORCIBLY, BUT NO ARRESTS WERE REPORTED.

3. THE HEADS OF THE GUSH EMUNIM SETTLER-ACTION COMMITTEE WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED BY THE SMALL TURNOUT OF SETTLERS AT THE KNESSET DEMONSTRATION. UNDAUNTED, THEY PLAN TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON BEGIN. THE ACTION COMMITTEE DECIDED, AT ITS FIRST MEETING ON DEC 28, THAT BEGINNING SUNDAY REPS OF THE SETTLERS BEYOND THE GREEN LINE, SPIRITUAL LEADERS, AND MKS OPPOSING THE PEACE PROGRAM WOULD POST A VIGIL OUTSIDE BEGIN'S JERUSALEM HOME. (THIS IDEA IS REPORTEDLY A BRAIN-CHILD OF LIKUD MK MOSHE SHAMIR). IN ADDITION, A PROTEST MEETING WILL BE HELD TODAY AT MOSHAV SADOT IN THE RAFAH APPROACHES. MEANWHILE, SECRETARIES OF THE MOSHAV FEDERATIONS APPEARED AT A TEL AVIV PRESS CONFERENCE FOR BEGIN TO CHANGE HIS PROPOSALS LEST THEIR SETTLEMENTS BE DAMAGED BY HIS DECISIONS.

4. HANAN PORAT, A TOP GUSH EMUNIM LEADER, HAS ESCALATED HIS PERSONAL CRITICISM OF BEGIN. SPEAKING TO THE PRESS, PORAT SAID HE NEVER EXPECTED TO HEAR FROM BEGIN'S LIPS THE "TERRIBLE STATEMENTS" HE WAS MAKING AT THE KNESSET. BUT, "THE PUBLIC--THE (JEWISH) RESIDENTS OF JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND THE RAFAH APPROACHES WILL BREAK HIM BY THEIR SUPERIOR MORAL FORCE." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FURTHERMORE, AS FAR AS PORAT WAS CONCERNED, "BEGIN WAS NEVER REALLY CONNECTED TO THE SOIL OF ERETZ YISRAEL AND THEREFORE CAN EASILY CONCEDE ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY IN JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND THE SINAI."

5. ALTHOUGH BEGIN MADE AN EFFORT DURING HIS KNESSET SPEECH, HE WAS NO LONGER ABLE TO MASK WITH WORDS HIS DIFFERENCES WITH GUSH EMUNIM AND THE COMPLETE LAND OF ISRAEL MOVEMENT. BEGIN ADMITTED THAT THIS CONFLICT WITH HIS FRIENDS HAD HURT HIM DEEPLY. NONETHELESS, HE SAID HE HAS A MISSION. HIS OLD FRIENDS--WITH WHOM HE HAS GONE A LONG WAY DURING GOOD TIMES AND BAD--MAY OPPOSE HIS POLICIES, BUT HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLLOW THE COURSE HE HAS SET, WHICH HE BELIEVES IS THE CORRECT ONE.

6. ALTHOUGH PREFERRING TO KEEP THEIR DIFFERENCES ON A POLITE LEVEL, GUSH CRITICISMS FINALLY ARE BEGINNING TO STING BEGIN INTO STRIKING BACK. IN THE CROWDED KNESSET RESTAURANT DURING THE KNESSET SESSION, BEGIN REACTED TO GUSH TAUNTS THAT HE IS STRIVING FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WITH A BIBLICAL QUOTE: "STAY DISTANT FROM LIES...LET THEM (THE GUSH) THINK WHAT THEY LIKE." IN ADDITION, BEGIN REMARKED: "I SAID TO GUSH EMUNIM, YOU ARE

SPEAKING LIKE MESSIAHS. WHO GAVE YOU THIS RIGHT? WHY ARE YOU SO CERTAIN THAT YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT?" YEDIOT ADDED THAT IN AN ENCOUNTER WITH GUSH MEMBERS IN THE KNESSET RESTAURANT, BEGIN ANGRILY ACCUSED THEM OF ACTING IN THEIR NARROW INTERESTS WHILE IGNORING BROAD NATIONAL NEEDS, AND LEVELLING GROUNDLESS ACCUSATIONS AT HIM. (COMMENT: IDEOLOGICAL REMONSTRATIONS--ALTHOUGH

NOT LEADING HIM TO CHANGE HIS POLICIES--WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE PAINFUL FOR BEGIN. HOWEVER, PERSONAL AND BELOW-THE-BELT CRITICISM APPEARS TO HAVE STEELED BEGIN TO REACT AGAINST THE GUSH.) LEWIS

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